

## He Has Done Everything Well

Mark 7:31-37



Jesus was on a teaching/preaching tour far away from his native land. He was traveling through Gentile territory, a place where no good Jew would visit. He probably wanted to have some respite because of the crowds, so a Gentile territory might offer him a small break. However, he couldn't keep his presence a secret and couldn't escape from those wanting something from him such as healing. (Mark 7:24-30). So, he performed many miraculous healings among the "unclean people" in Tyre, Sidon, and the region of the Decapolis.

Citizens of the region lived far away from the political and religious cities; they were also considered unclean and impure. Therefore, they were on the religious, political, and social margins of life, which meant they were rejected, neglected, and sometimes abused by the worldly powers. In addition, their customs were totally different from those of the Jews. One story to help us understand the difference is found in Mark 5:1-18, the story of Jesus healing a Gentile man living in this region with unclean spirits. When Jesus cast the demons out of the man, the unclean spirits entered into a herd of nearby pigs, then the animals rushed down to the cliff and drowned in the sea. This region's economy was based on raising pigs. Even though pigs were considered detestable animals for a regular Israelite, for the sake of their economy, the inhabitants of that area expelled Jesus because of the exorcism and its adverse financial consequences.

Why would Jesus go back to a place where he had been previously expelled? Why would he come back to those who didn't want to listen to him, to those who made themselves voluntarily deaf to his teaching? From a Jewish perspective, Jesus was not "doing everything well" because he was ministering to impure people in a foreign land. He was in the wrong place hanging out with the wrong people. Apparently, they were voluntarily deaf to God's message for them.

Unpredictably, on his way back to Galilee, Jesus encountered a group of citizens in that region that brought a deaf and speech impaired man to be healed. The man seemed to be much loved by his friends, because they insisted that Jesus heal him by laying hands upon him. They had a preconceived methodology of healing. They suggested to Jesus just how to perform this miracle: by the laying on of hands. One might ponder at this point, if the people could see in Jesus some healing powers, but they could not hear his message. Maybe this beloved deaf friend of theirs was a representation of their general deaf condition to hear God's voice. Maybe this was a community unable to speak appropriately about godly matters. If they couldn't hear God, then they certainly could not speak well about Jesus. Thankfully, Jesus in his mercy and love forgot the previous rejection and healed the man.

According to the gospel, the procedure to heal this man would be different and probably unorthodox. The treatment would be intrusive and odd instead of simply the laying on of hands. The healing process began by taking the impaired man apart of the deafening crowd. Privacy with Jesus would help him to regain listening skills. The healing miracle started with a private appointment with Jesus.

### **Questions:**

*Can you tell us a story of a time when you were with Jesus and you could touch him, hear him, or feel him? Do you remember what Jesus healed or assured in your life during those particular circumstances of yours?*

The next thing Jesus did was to pierce the obstructed ears instead of just touching them. This quite possibly was a painful action. Disregarding the issue of contamination caused by touching ear secretions, Jesus' intrusion to destroy obstacles in communication could be uncomfortable for both parties - Jesus and the sick man. Was there some divine anesthesia involved? Maybe the poor man was crying out in pain, and many could hear his painful voice.

**Questions:**

*Have you heard beloved people of God crying out in pain? How can we comfort those we think are in close relationship with God but are suffering? How do you explain pain and suffering in the lives of faithful Christians?*

This was not the end of the healing process. While having his fingers busy piercing the man's ears, Jesus also spat saliva out on the man's tongue. Some might say that this was a disgusting action. From a Jewish perspective, it sounded more like a curse than a blessing. This process of overcoming the impairment was certainly unusual. For sure, what came out of Jesus didn't defile the man. But at this point surely the man's facial expressions showed his distress.

**Question:**

*What would a witness think about this scene? Was Jesus healing or cursing or doing something else? Where have you been surprised by God's odd actions?*

This particular healing was taking longer than expected. After spitting on the man's tongue, Jesus looked up to the heaven because the healing in this case would certainly be a gift from heaven. Wonderful! This was not your "run of the mill" healing. Jesus loved these people, and restored that man. Amen! With this most unusual healing, Jesus was uniting the broken physical and spiritual realms in the community represented by this man.

**Questions:**

*List some loving actions you performed for other where there was a visible result. Now, from that list, name those actions that you repeat even though there were not tangible results of your efforts – only done to express your love to someone else.*

At this point in the story, the healing process needed more intervention. Jesus opted for the use of body and verbal language. Jesus' frustration was visible through his sigh. Have you ever breathed that deeply as Jesus did to express his fatigue? Jesus used his native language, Aramaic, to express himself, instead of Greek, the official language. The word Jesus used, "Effatha," means, "Open up." Maybe Jesus was tired, but he continued healing the man's inability to speak.

**Questions:**

*What is your reaction when you hear others speaking with their native language, with unique slang and accent, which is different than yours? Are you curious or offended? Knowing that Jesus used his native language during a miraculous healing, instead of the local language, how might your native language or communication skills be useful to bless or "heal" others?*

As soon as the man was healed, the community's speech was released as well. Even though Jesus commanded them not tell anyone about what happened, the restored community testified that "Jesus has done everything well." Even when they learned that Jesus spat on the man, they realized that whatever comes out from Jesus' body cannot defile any person. This is Good News! Jesus does do all things well

**Prayer:**

*Surprising Jesus, sometimes, you do unexpected things to heal us personally, and communally. It doesn't matter how odd, intrusive, invasive or unclean it might seem, everything coming out of you will heal our deafness and speech impairment, and it will cleanse us. Jesus, you do everything well. Amen.*